

WORK-BASED LEARNING OVERVIEW

Much of what we know and learn is connected directly to the work we do. Prior to the industrial revolution, most learning was directly related to work-based activities. Young people learned by watching and working alongside their parents or through apprenticeships with master artisans.

With the onset of the industrial revolution, the evolution of education began to separate work from the learning process. Over time, the gap between education and the world of work has grown increasingly broad. Often concepts learned in the classroom have no world of work significance for many students because the classroom isn't connected to the world of work. Education cannot be derived solely from textbooks and lectures; it must also include practical, hands-on experience that challenges students to apply what they have learned in the classroom.

DEFINITION AND EXPLANATION

Work-based learning is career awareness and exploration, work experience, structured training, and/or mentoring at the work site. There are work-based learning activities appropriate for every grade level to support students in developing career awareness, exploring career options, developing appropriate workplace skills, and relating academic skills to real-world applications.

Work-based learning provides students with opportunities to study complex subject matter as well as vital workplace skills in a hands-on, "real life" environment. Students have opportunities to apply the knowledge and skills they have acquired in the classroom to tasks performed in the workplace. As students see the connections between their school work and what is required at the work site, they gain an understanding of the importance of learning and are able to make better decisions about their futures.

WBL ACTIVITIES

- Apprenticeships
- Career Fairs
- Clinical Work Experience
- Cooperative Work Experiences
- Educator Internships
- Field Studies
- Guest Speakers
- Job Shadows
- School-based Enterprises
- Service Learning
- Student Internships

WBL OBJECTIVES

- Extend the walls of the classroom learning to include the community
- Provide meaning for students by narrowing the gap between theory and practice
- Allow for career awareness, exploration and preparation activities that are coordinated with school-based learning activities
- Provide students with opportunities for first-hand experiences in a professional work setting
- Allow students to explore career options in a particular field of work
- Use a combination of course work and part-time work experience for which school credit/outcome verification is awarded
- Use written training agreements to outline what students are expected to learn and demonstrate at the work site and what employers are expected to provide

STANDARDS

A work-based learning coordinator is an educational professional who:

- Can implement every aspect of the state's work-based learning program
- Can provide appropriate work-based learning services to and through various established education service areas
- Is informed about work-based learning regulations and how they affect and apply to students, schools, business/industry partners, parents and other entities that become involved with work-based learning activities
- Understands and utilizes basic marketing and public relations principles to promote, develop and maintain community partnerships and foster support of work-based learning within the education system
- Understands and exemplifies the need to coordinate among all participants to ensure work-based learning activities and functions take place with minimal conflict and optimal outcomes
- Utilizes the classroom to provide relevant work-based learning instruction, workplace readiness skills development and evaluate participants in various work-based learning activities
- Performs all necessary administrative responsibilities pertaining to the establishment and maintenance of a quality work-based learning program